



\$5,000 WINNER

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 Movement



## Microstep

Get moving by doing easy arm and neck stretches.



## Outcome

“I’m enjoying being active with my family”

I was caring for everyone in my family, but I wasn’t taking care of my own health. My husband, Mike, and I have two teenagers, and I look after my mom who has Parkinson’s. I cook her meals, take her to appointments, bathe her, and help her do her exercises. I’m only 38, but I was exhausted and stressed. Some days I’d barely eat, and I wasn’t making time to exercise. I started to have sharp back pains, which got so bad I could hardly walk. My husband insisted on taking me to the ER. We found out I had sepsis and extremely low potassium levels, and I was in the hospital for a week. I recovered, but I knew I needed to make some changes. My colleague, Miguel, told me about the Thrive Challenge, and he inspired me to get started.

### My first Microstep was to get moving by doing easy arm and neck stretches.

Then I added squats and lunges and going for short walks with Mike. I learned that I didn’t need to do anything extreme; I could start by moving for ten minutes. My walks became longer and now I’m up to 10,000 steps a day. Mike and I go for bike rides through a rose garden in the park with our kids, 13-year-old Alexia and 18-year-old Abraham. Sometimes we’ll play Kan Jam, and whenever we can, we all go fishing, which we love.

### I’ve changed the way I eat and I don’t feel sluggish anymore.

My mom was a good cook, and I always used to help her in the kitchen. Now I’m getting creative with recipes again, like honey-glazed pork with mango salsa and veggies. A Microstep I really like is sitting down and savoring meals with my family. I have a sweet tooth, but instead of eating candies, I’ll make a delicious blueberry chia smoothie. Eating nutritious food is helping me lower my stress. Another Microstep that’s made a difference to my energy is bringing a reusable water bottle to work so I stay hydrated.

### One big thing I’m learning from Thrive is to reach out for support.

My husband and kids help out with the chores and they’re helping me take care of my mom. I also got a nursing aide to support Mom. She’ll cook and help her get ready for bed. I’ve found that sharing the responsibilities means I don’t feel as irritable or stressed with Mom, and I have more patience. I’ll massage her legs and paint her nails — she likes purple and blue. We’re enjoying each other’s company.

### Now I can make time for my hobbies.

I like doing diamond art, and I just finished a beautiful picture of the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland. I’m knitting again, which my mom taught me when I was little. I’m making a fluffy blanket for her right now that I know she’ll love. We’ll snuggle up together and watch T.V.

### As a family, we’re scheduling time for activities we all enjoy.

On the weekend, we have game nights; we’ll play Sorry or Trouble. We all love rock music, and we’re going to concerts. We just went to see This Moment. I play video games with Abraham, and Alexia and I do each other’s hair and makeup. She’s way better than me, but we’re having a lot of fun getting creative.

### Instead of rushing from one task to another, I’ve slowed down.

If I feel stressed, I pause and take a breath or watch a Thrive Reset. My favorites are the Rubbing Hands Exercise and the one with the calming sound of rain. They help me relax and wind down. I’m sleeping better and feeling more peaceful. I know I can care for my mom without feeling overwhelmed. The biggest thing I’ve learned is that accepting help isn’t giving up — I don’t have to do everything on my own.